

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CSCE, SHUM, NO, CZ
SUBJECT: HARASSMENT OF NORWEGIAN JOURNALISTS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA;
CZECH COUNTERCHARGES

REF: OSLO 3932 (NOTAL)

1. TWO STAFFERS OF OSLO'S LEADING DAILY AFTENPOSTEN EN ROUTE BACK TO NORWAY WERE DETAINED AT PRAGUE AIRPORT AUG 8 BY CZECH AUTHORITIES. THE TWO, DEPUTY FOREIGN EDITOR STEIN SAVIK AND PHOTOGRAPHER JOHN MYHRE, HAD THEIR NOTES AND FILM RANSACKED BEFORE BEING PERMITTED TO LEAVE CZECHOSLOVAKIA AUGUST 9. THE NORWEGIAN JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION SENT A LETTER PROTESTING THE ACTION TO PRESIDENT HUSAK AUGUST 11, ALSO CHARGING THAT THE TWO NEWSPAPER MEN WERE CONSTANTLY SHADOWED BY SECRET POLICE DURING THEIR SOJOURN IN THE COUNTRY.

2. ACCORDING TO A REPORT APPEARING IN "AFTENPOSTEN," AUGUST 17, THE CZECH CP NEWSPAPER RUDE PRAVO, MOST LIKELY IN REACTION TO THE NORWEGIAN JOURNALISTS' PROTEST, DELIVERED A STRONG CRITICISM OF POLITICAL CONDITIONS IN NORWAY
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IN AN ARTICLE APPEARING AUGUST 16. RUDE PRAVO REPORTEDLY PAINTED A PICTURE OF RESTRICTIONS OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN NORWAY, AND ALLEGED THAT THE NORWEGIAN COMMUNIST PARTY AND OTHER FAR-LEFT GROUPS WERE DENIED ACCESS TO NORWEGIAN RADIO AND TV, AND TO THE LARGEST PERIODICALS.

3. COINCIDENTAL WITH THE SHARP CZECH-NORWEGIAN EXCHANGE,

THE LABOR PARTY-LED COMMITTEE FOR SUPPORT OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA ANNOUNCED AUGUST 14 THAT A PARADE AND RALLY COMMEMORATING THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOVIET INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA WOULD BE HELD IN OSLO AUGUST 21. LEADERS OF NORWAY'S LABOR AND LEFT SOCIALIST PARTIES WILL PARTICIPATE, AND ZDENEK HEJZLAR, FORMER HEAD OF CZECH TV IN THE DUBCEK PERIOD, WILL BE A FEATURED SPEAKER. HEJZLAR'S BOOK ON THE PRAGUE SPRING ENTITLED "IN THE SHADOW OF PRAGUE" WILL APPEAR IN NORWEGIAN DURING THE WEEK OF AUGUST 21.

4. PUBLIC REACTION TO THE DETENTION OF THE TWO NEWSMEN IN PRAGUE HAS BEEN STRONG, ESPECIALLY SINCE IT COINCIDES WITH THE DENIAL OF ENTRY VISAS TO FOUR NORWEGIAN PRESSMEN BY THE SOVIETS AUGUST 14 (REFTEL). THE GON FORMALLY PROTESTED THE SOVIET ACTION IN A STATEMENT HERE, AND, ACCORDING TO MFA, THE NORWEGIAN AMBASSADOR IN PRAGUE WAS INSTRUCTED TO PROTEST IN STRONG TERMS TO THE CZECHS, CITING THE GUARANTEES OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT.

5. THE EVENTS OF THE PAST WEEK HAVE SERVED TO HEIGHTEN NORWEGIAN AWARENESS OF ABUSES IN BLOC COUNTRIES OF BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS, BOTH AS THEY AFFECT NORWEGIANS AND EAST EUROPEANS. SPOKESMEN OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT IN NORWAY (INCLUDING LEFTIST MEMBERS OF THE RULING LABOR PARTY) HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY VOCAL ABOUT THE PRAGUE INCIDENT AND SOVIET VISA DENIALS. WITH THESE EVENTS FRESH IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MIND, WE EXPECT THAT THE SUPPORT FOR CZECHOSLOVAKIA RALLY AUGUST 21, INVOLVING LEADING FIGURES OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT IN NORWAY, WILL FOCUS ON HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AND REPRESEION THROUGHOUT THE BLOC COUNTRIES. BREMER

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